



# BIRDS

## Cerulean Warbler proposed for federal listing

By Michael F. Burger, Ph.D.

In October 2000, a petition was filed with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Cerulean Warbler (*Dendroica cerulea*) as federally threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The Cerulean Warbler is a small, neotropical migratory wood-warbler that derives its name from the bright blue plumage of the adult male. Breeding Bird Survey data indicate that the species is declining at a rate of approximately 4 percent per year, which is comparable to the most precipitous rates found among North American birds.

Cerulean Warblers breed throughout eastern North America in large tracts of upland or bottomland deciduous forests having large trees and an open understory. Hundreds breed at several Important Bird Areas in New York state, with the greatest numbers found at the Montezuma Wetlands Complex and Allegany State Park. Smaller, yet significant, numbers of breeders are found at

Salmon Creek, Letchworth State Park, Doodletown and Iona Island, Schodack Island State Park and Whiskey Hollow IBAs. They are known to winter at lower elevations in northern South America, although specific characteristics of migratory and wintering habitats are poorly known.

Habitat destruction and fragmentation on both the breeding and wintering areas are believed to be the major cause for their decline, but whether or not one area is more limiting than the other remains unknown. Clearing of extensive forests for agriculture and other purposes and replacement of old-growth forests with those managed on a shorter rotation are the main causes of habitat destruction. Old growth or wilderness forest stands with numerous canopy gaps can provide quality Cerulean Warbler breeding habitat. Additionally, silviculture of breeding habitat resulting in large trees, tall canopies and diversity of vertical structure may provide suitable areas for them. More research and monitoring are needed to deter-



Bill Dyer/Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Cerulean Warbler

mine whether quality breeding habitat for this species can be created through management.

For further information on how you can help contact Dr. Michael Burger at [mburger@audubon.org](mailto:mburger@audubon.org).

## Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon team up for birds

By John Fitzpatrick, Ph.D.

In the winter of 1996, I received a phone call that has produced a remarkable partnership between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon New York.

The call came from David J. Miller, Audubon New York's executive director. We discussed ways we might work together, for the benefit of our respective organizations and to advance conservation of birds and habitats across New York. By that spring, Audubon's newly hired Important Bird Areas (IBA) program director, Jeff Wells, was hard at work among the conservation biologists, educators and citizen science staff here at the Lab. Jeff later became Audubon's National Direc-

tor of Bird Conservation, and continues to hang his hat at the Lab of Ornithology.

Today, Audubon New York's bird conservation director is Mike Burger. Mike is also stationed here and shortly he'll be joined by another, soon-to-be-hired conservation biologist. This cross fertilization — the power of Audubon's grassroots constituency and advocacy efforts combined with the Lab's scientific foundation and citizen-science know-how — has spawned a creative and productive conservation team.

In 1998, representatives from Audubon and the Lab were appointed to the New York State Bird Conservation Advisory Committee, a legislative group that aims the spotlight of bird conservation on state-owned lands. The

‘ TOGETHER, OUR ORGANIZATIONS ARE ACCOMPLISHING MORE FOR BIRD CONSERVATION THAN EITHER COULD ACCOMPLISH ON ITS OWN. ’

Lab's assistant conservation director, Ken Rosenberg, served on Audubon's IBA technical committee, reviewing data and making final decisions about which sites met IBA criteria. In turn, Audubon's staff is providing key insights for the Lab's Cerulean Warbler Atlas Project (CEWAP) and Golden-winged Warbler Atlas Project (GOWAP), by suggesting survey locations across the state and providing

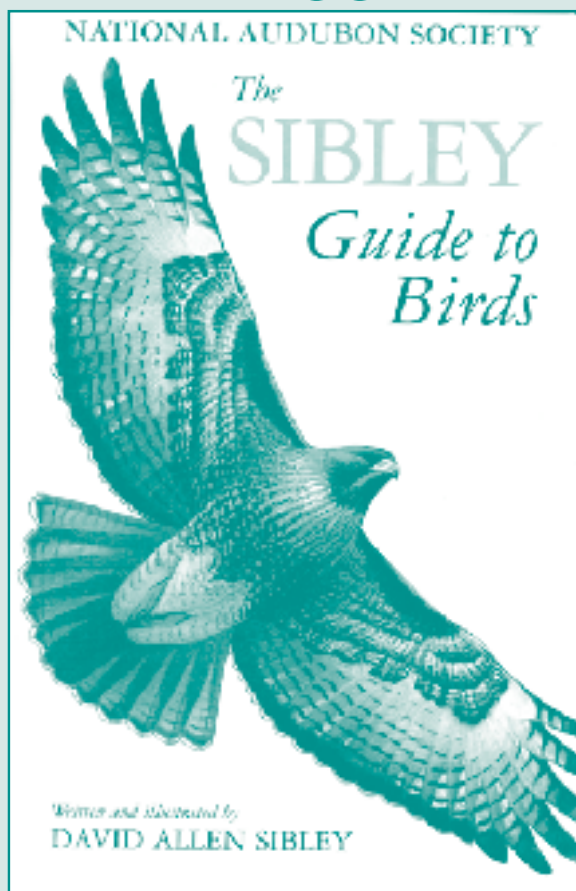
contact information for birders and biologists who might be interested in conducting survey work. Audubon members received an invitation penned by Dave Miller and myself to join Project FeederWatch, a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders throughout North America.

Dave and I are extremely excited about our latest initiative, which is to make all of New York's IBA data available on the web. The information will be delivered through BirdSource, an internet-based database developed and managed by the Lab and National Audubon. Soon, everyone who visits an IBA will be able to call up a checklist for that particular site and even enter their own bird observations online. They will be able to access their data, as well as the data provided by others, for a more complete picture of the bird life that depends upon these vital habitats. Such a tool will enable us to make great strides in monitoring and protecting IBAs.

As the strengths of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon New York continue to grow, so does the strength of our partnership. Together, our organizations are accomplishing more for bird conservation than either could accomplish on its own. Dave's phone call five years ago was the beginning of a relationship that will help to ensure that the calls of birds will be heard across New York state for generations to come.

John Fitzpatrick is director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

### New birding guide now for sale



The anxiously awaited addition to Knopf's National Audubon Society publishing program has arrived. The formidable guide written and illustrated by celebrated artist and birder David Sibley contains more than 6,500 richly detailed paintings. Captioned illustrations of nearly 810 species and 350 regional species at rest and in flight in addition to maps of their migration routes and breeding locations have been assembled in this easy-to-use book. Readers are prepared for future species splits. Never before subspecies and all significant geographic variants are also depicted. The field guide will quickly become an essential reference tool for the identification of North American birds. The guide retails for \$35 US/\$53 Canadian and is sold in many bookstores.